

Top Secret



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LIBYA-EGYPT: Differences between Presidents Qadhafi and Sadat are sharpening as the deadline for union draws closer, but the two leaders apparently have agreed to proclaim the merger in September as scheduled.

The announcement, however, will be largely symbolic. According to a projected timetable, the formal proclamation will be followed by the appointment of a unified cabinet and the ratification of a new constitution. Sadat and Qadhafi have made little progress, however, in working out the details of the proposed union, and both apparently intend to drag out the actual process of integrating their countries.

Qadhafi's position in the leadership of the new state is the most immediate problem to be resolved.

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Although Qadhafi has frequently stated that Sadat must accept the presidency, he reportedly envisages the merger as a means of eventually dominating Sadat. The Libyan leader will probably angle for a role that will give him direct access to the Egyptian military and freedom to direct a mass political movement throughout the merged state.

Cairo is worried about and disdainful of Qadhafi's cultural revolution, and Egyptian references to Libya and Qadhafi are taking on an obliquely critical tone. In an interview during his visit to Tripoli last week, President Sadat wished Qadhafi's "experiment" success in Libya, but he noted that only time will tell whether the experiment is suitable for other Arabs. He made only perfunctory reference to union. Cairo press treatment also has been increasingly unfavorable; on 20 June an influential Cairo columnist criticized

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"bombshell measures" that have a temporary popular impact but do not take into account the "greater realities." This is the most severe public chiding Cairo has directed at Qadhafi and it may presage a period of greater Egyptian-Libyan tension as the date for merger approaches.

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